



Building gender equitable sweetpotato value chains: Recommendations for programming

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International Potato Center

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Introduction

The International Potato Center (CIP) is implementing the Scaling Up Sweetpotato through Agriculture and Nutrition (SUSTAIN) program in Bangladesh, Kenya, Malawi, Mozambique, Rwanda, and Tanzania to promote orange fleshed sweetpotato (OFSP) for nutrition improvement and income.

Research has illustrated that the slow development of markets can be a major constraint to sweetpotato production¹ (Low, 1995). To address this gap, the SUSTAIN program has been promoting the commercialization of OFSP varieties by linking farmers with the commercial processing sector.

Commercialization of crops, however, has not always been gender responsive. For example, Fischer and Qaim (2012)² show how commercialization of banana in Kenya, which was traditionally a women's crop, led to men taking over and women losing their source of income.

Historically in much of Eastern and Southern Africa, sweetpotato has been regarded as a woman's crop because it has been cultivated mainly for food. While development efforts towards commercialization of sweetpotato are intended to increase economic benefits for both men and women farmers, there are potential risks. In particular, the gender dimension seems to be important as women and men are engaged in different ways in sweetpotato production and utilization and at different points of the value chain. Any strategy for sweetpotato commercialization and scaling up should therefore be based on an understanding of how commercialization of the OFSP value chain affects the framework of opportunities and constraints for smallholder sweetpotato farmers, particularly women, who in many country contexts have a big stake in sweetpotato production and/or trade. It is also important to understand the incentives and constraints for commercialization arising from gender inequity along the value chain.

Why it is necessary to mainstream gender into projects/programs that seek to commercialize sweetpotato?

Mainstreaming gender into projects or programs focusing on commercialization of sweetpotato ensures that both men and women are able to benefit. This will make it less likely that practices are promoted that marginalize women, who often do the work but do not always enjoy the fruits of their labor. It is important to have a critical assessment of commercialization approaches within programs or projects and to understand the situation so both men and women can benefit from agriculture. When commercializing a crop, it is important to be gender responsive to ensure that women and also young people are not further disadvantaged.

In recent years, the international donor community has increased its emphasis on gender mainstreaming and inclusive development. For example, in its call to action DFID (2018:3)³ states that all its work should “challenge

¹ Low, J.W. 1995. Determinants of Sweetpotato Commercialization in South Nyanza, Kenya Paper Presented at the Sixth Triennial Symposium of the International Society for Tropical Root Crops---Africa Branch Capital City, Lilongwe, Malawi 22-28 October 1995. http://www.sweetpotatoknowledge.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/determinants_of_sweetpotato_commercialization_in_south_nyanza_low_1995_2.pdf

² Fischer, E. and Qaim, M. 2012. Gender, agricultural commercialization, and collective action in Kenya. Food Sec. 4:441–453. DOI 10.1007/s12571-012-0199-7.

³ Department for International Development (DFID). 2018. DFID Strategic vision for gender equality a call to action for her potential, our future. London, UK: DFID https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/708116/Strategic-vision-gender-equality1.pdf

and change unequal power relations between men and women, and negative attitudes and discriminatory practices that hold women and girls back”.

The Women's empowerment in agriculture index⁴ suggests that it is important to make investments in women empowerment in five key areas: production; access to and decisions about resources; income; participation in leadership; and decision making on time allocation in the home. It suggests that reducing gender inequality in these areas will increase agricultural production, reduce poverty, improve nutritional outcomes, and increase incomes for both men and women smallholder farmers in rural areas. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation⁵ (BMGF) goes further: its projects must be designed with target groups (especially women) in mind, focusing on their participation in the design of interventions.

Programs also need to be accountable and measure results to ensure that women are not only participating but benefiting. If women and young people are excluded from benefits and participation, agricultural growth will not be inclusive.

The purpose of these recommendations, based on the experiences and lessons from the SUSTAIN program and informed by the CGIAR gender research work, is to support CIP's future programming efforts to take into account gender dimensions more effectively.

Process of development of the gender recommendations

The gender strategy of the CGIAR Research Program on Roots, Tubers and Bananas (RTB) includes guidelines for gender integration in all research and development projects conducted under the auspices of CIP and RTB. The strategy states that all work must ensure that both men and women benefit from interventions to ensure positive development outcomes (RTB Strategy, 2013)⁶. It aims to achieve two types of gender outcomes:

- *Gender-responsive*: both men and women benefit from RTB technologies and neither are harmed.
- *Gender-transformative*: both men and women are helped while gender roles are transformed and more gender-equitable relationships between men and women are promoted.

Guided by the strategy, SUSTAIN funded and implement gender analysis studies in Kenya, Mozambique, and Tanzania in order to gather evidence on the impact of sweetpotato commercialization on gender relations and on men's and women's livelihoods. The studies sought to understand how commercialization of sweetpotato value chains affect (positively or negatively) the wellbeing of smallholder farmers and their families, particularly women's opportunities as producers, traders, and consumers. Study participants included men and women, commercial and subsistence sweetpotato root farmers and also vine multipliers. Extension workers, private sector partners and staff from project partners were also interviewed to gather their opinions and perceptions on gender issues and how these affect sweetpotato commercialization. Quantitative data from baseline and end-line surveys were reanalyzed from a gender perspective.

Findings and lessons from these studies were analyzed and used to formulate an initial strategy. The IPC then invited stakeholders (representatives from the private sector, farmers, government workers, researchers, men and women farmers, and young men and women farmers) from Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Malawi, and Mozambique to a meeting where the study results were presented. Participants from other countries also shared their experiences of gender and commercialization of sweetpotato. Participants at the meeting worked in small groups to validate the studies' findings and develop strategies that could address the challenges raised. Participants also validated the draft strategy. The current document is based on the findings from this analysis as well as the validation exercise.

⁴ International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI). 2012. Women's empowerment in agriculture index. IFPRI, Oxford Poverty and Human Development Initiative and Feed the Future: Washington DC, USA.
<http://ebrary.ifpri.org/utils/getfile/collection/p15738coll2/id/126937/filename/127148.pdf>

⁵ Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF). 2012. Creating gender-responsive agricultural development programs. BMGF: Settle, USA.
<https://docs.gatesfoundation.org/documents/gender-responsive-orientation-document.pdf>

⁶ CGIAR Research Program on Roots, Tubers and Bananas. 2013. RTB Gender Strategy. Lima, Peru: CRP RTB.
<https://hdl.handle.net/10568/83400>

Summary of results

In Kenya and Mozambique, sweetpotato commercialization has evolved with involvement of the private sector becoming increasingly dominant. For example, CIP has engaged with Organi Limited in Kenya and Zebra Farms in Mozambique to create markets for OFSP. Other companies, such as Mumi Enterprises in Malawi and Hot Oven Bakery in Tanzania, have become involved as purchasers of OFSP puree to make bread and other confectionaries, mainly for urban consumers.

In Kenya and Mozambique, farmers who participated in qualitative studies and also the validation workshop perceived many advantages to sweetpotato commercialization through private sector channels. These included: bulk sales that reduced the drudgery related to small-scale sales - for the latter, farmers carry bags of sweetpotatoes on their heads or use bicycles to transport them long distances; standardization of pricing systems through payment per kilogram, which both men and women farmers considered to be fairer than the traditional approach of selling by bags or heaps; and major private sector players are regarded as being honest brokers compared to informal market traders who could sometimes refuse to pay for goods delivered.

These new modes of commercialization have gendered impacts. For example, in Kenya, men in focus group discussions (FGDs) blamed sweetpotato commercialization for making it harder to get land to rent due to increased competition and rental fees. Women, meanwhile, mentioned that availability of money from OFSP has made their lives better; they could now rent small pieces of land to cultivate on their own and stop depending on their men.

Both men and women perceived that commercialization allowed women to challenge hierarchical male domination. Giving women access to more income and enabling them to contribute significantly to the household budget means that now men have to consult them before making decisions. Also, women are able to use their income to purchase livestock, land and other assets, which has improved their economic and social standing relative to their husbands. During the FGDs, women mentioned that they are now able to fund the lifestyle they want; for example, buying nice clothes for themselves and their children, using income to purchase good quality food or investing in livestock that they can control.

However, the FGDs revealed that in some families sweetpotato commercialization has resulted in more gender inequality. For example, some men took over sweetpotato farming and marketing after commercialization. This concentrated power in men's hands; they made independent decisions on crop cultivation and could also control the income. Most women could not challenge this as they regarded men as the head of the household.

In households where men and women jointly made decisions about production of OFSP and its marketing, more sweetpotato was produced for the market. These households also tended to make joint decisions about the use of the income they derived.

The intersection of gender and other demographic indicators is also important. For instance, women in polygamous households who participated in commercialized OFSP production reported that they experienced more independence. This enabled them to look after their families without waiting for their husbands or begging for his money. Additionally, it was also clear that, compared to older married women, newly married women had less control over income from sweetpotato commercialization, even when they contributed all the labor, because of deference to male household heads. Often children of the poorest families worked for better-off farmers, harvesting and washing sweetpotato. This meant they missed out on education, creating a vicious cycle of poverty.

In FGDs and interviews in both Mozambique and Malawi it was suggested that in some families, men decide whether women participate and benefit from OFSP trade. For example, findings presented by SUSTAIN Mozambique show that some women vine entrepreneurs were forbidden by their husbands to continue with the business; cases of domestic violence were reported against women who ignored their husbands decisions. At the workshop, men and women farmers from Malawi suggested that men feel threatened when women earn more money than them. In Kenya, men and women farmers also stated the same; some men reported that they needed to control women's earnings so that they are not shamed in their community. Commercialization may therefore marginalize women from a crop that hitherto has been theirs.

In Malawi, Mozambique, Kenya, and Tanzania the economic benefits enjoyed included purchase of motorbikes (mostly men), ability to pay for school fees and purchase school supplies such as exercise books and pens (mostly women) and home improvements. Thanks to the project, women acquired better marketing skills, which enabled them to sell directly to traders rather than middlemen. Some women sold the crop jointly with their husbands who were perceived to have better negotiating skills due to their engagement in other cash crop value chains. Some women reported improvements in their wealth status and also better access to health services because they could afford health insurance using income from selling sweetpotato.

Positive changes in gender norms related to resource sharing, asset acquisition, and decision making were observed at household level. Despite constraints like limited mobility, access to resources and price fluctuations, sweetpotato commercialization generated more positive than negative impacts for both women and men. Commercialization does not always disadvantage women: where programs are designed in a gender responsive way, including sensitization of communities and families, interventions can have a positive effect on gender relations. Household approaches that promote meaningful joint decision making should be adopted as part of program design so that women benefit as much as men from interventions.

In Mozambique, in spite of progressive policies at the government level, gender inequality is still common, and women face obstacles to engage in economically viable activities. While sweetpotato is traditionally a women's crop in Mozambique, it has not been easy for women to participate in the lucrative OFSP value chain. For example, women could not open up big areas of land for vine multiplication for commercialized production as this required obtaining permission from their husbands, who were the land owners. The relative prioritization of sweetpotato compared to other agricultural enterprises that men may consider more important can also prevent women from increasing their sweetpotato production areas. Focal group discussions and interviews showed that men got involved as DVMs when they realized that it was a high-income enterprise. A major obstacle to women's participation in vine multiplication in Mozambique is husbands who may forbid them. One explanation why men block commercialization of OFSP by women is that they fear that women will earn more than them. Another major constraint is that women need to seek permission to use land for OFSP.

Recommendations for addressing key constraints

Key constraint 1: Poor quality vines leading to low yields and poor quality sweetpotato that does not meet the needs of the private sector

Men and women farmers stated that a key challenge for their OFSP enterprises was the poor availability of quality vines. They often stated that vines were of poor quality if they could not tolerate long dry spells characteristic of the area. Vines of some OFSP varieties were regarded as of poor quality because they not tolerant to dry spells. Due to lack of access to water if vines are not tolerant to dry spells they are vines are difficult to which affects root yield and ability to trade. Diseased planting material also leads to poor yields as well as poor quality roots. This was a key challenge for both men and women farmers and traders in OFSP. While farmers mentioned the need for quality planting material that was pest and disease free, some farmers stated that this was difficult to achieve since farmers would not be willing to invest in producing quality seed since there was no market for vines. It was noted that farmers want free vines as that is what they are used to. Because of lack of desire to pay for vines it becomes difficult to commercialize the quality sweetpotato vine production enterprise.

Recommendation: The strategy to address this is multipronged. There is need to improve the quality of sweetpotato vines by training both men and women seed producers and decentralized vine multipliers (DVMs). It is important to introduce improved agronomic practices to both men and women to ensure excellent quality, including suitable size roots as demanded by the private sector. If there is demand and market for the roots, this may promote willingness by farmers to pay for quality vines.

Key constraint 2: Lack of access to credit

Both men and women farmers in Kenya and Mozambique mentioned the lack of access to capital as a key challenge in expanding their OFSP enterprises. Workshop participants from Malawi, Tanzania, and Rwanda also

concurred that this was a key obstacle. Women were especially affected; for example, it was often noted that widows did not have either cash or access to credit to hire the labor and oxen they needed for land preparation to expand their sweetpotato farming enterprises. An analysis of baseline data on sweetpotato sales by widows and married women, in which both groups indicated that they made decisions regarding the selling of sweetpotato, showed higher sales (in terms of sweetpotato roots sold as well as the value of sales) for married women than widows. Young people also lacked access to credit because they had no assets they could use as collateral.

Recommendation: Link farmers to financial institutions (microfinance institutions) and other organizations offering small loans for purchase of vines and other inputs.

Key constraint 3: Women do not benefit from income from sweetpotato enterprises equally with men

The study confirmed the importance of joint decision-making in ensuring that husbands and wives benefit equally. Access to and use of income can lead to family disagreements and even domestic violence. Also, farmers often do not budget but just spend money as they receive it. This can create tensions in the home, such as when the wife judges that money has been misused. Such family disagreements can compromise the ability to participate in OFSP farming as a business. If husbands do not agree, it is likely to be difficult for the wife to start OFSP farming.

Households where men and women made joint decisions about production of OFSP and its marketing produced more sweetpotato for the market than those that did not. These households also tended to make joint decisions about the use of income generated. Women in polygamous households had more independence and ability to participate in commercialized OFSP production than wives in monogamous households. They appreciated that this enabled them to provide for their families without having to beg their husbands for money. Polygamous wives also reported that they had unrestricted access to training and markets.

Only women respondents reported that OFSP farming as a business had enabled them to save, open bank accounts, and pay back debts. This may highlight the need to train men on managing their money.

Recommendation: Employing household-based approaches to sweetpotato commercialization, including household budgeting, with both husbands and wives jointly participating in household and farm decision making.

Key constraint 4: Lack of access to more lucrative markets by women

A common finding was that often women could only sell their sweetpotato in small local markets. This was due to lack of access to more lucrative markets and also withholding of permission to trade by their husbands. This constraint can be divided into different subcategories including:

Lack of diversified markets

The market survey revealed that there was little demand for OFSP in the open market in Kenya. This was because the watery OFSP varieties grown did not have the traits preferred by consumers. Retailers do not like stocking OFSP because it rots easily so they concentrated on white and yellow-fleshed sweetpotato that have a longer shelf life. In Kenya, OFSP was only grown when there was a reliable buyer, such as Organi Limited. In contrast in Mozambique, demand for OFSP in the open market is strong but processing is weak.

Monopolies for OFSP can exploit farmers

Farmers reported they preferred to have a choice of outlets for their OFSP. With just one buyer they were exposed to the risk of price manipulation. Additionally, sometimes selected private sector players in both Mozambique and Kenya did not have the capacity to absorb all the OFSP that farmers produced. This meant that surplus sweetpotato could rot on the farm, representing a loss to the farmer. In Tanzania, the opposite problem occurred; farmers failed to supply buyers with the right quantity of sweetpotato at the right time.

Uninformed clientele

Retailers in towns and cities reported that that OFSP was relatively unknown by their customers; they did not know how to cook it and were unaware of its nutritional benefits.

Recommendation: Promote consumption of OFSP in local and also in urban markets through communication campaigns designed to increase awareness of the benefits associated with OFSP and inform consumers how it can be cooked. This will help to diversify markets and increase demand for OFSP.

Key constraint 5: Social and gender norms that disadvantage women limit their ability to participate meaningfully in commercialization projects

Men often control income and they can feel insecure when women earn more than them. Commercialization can therefore result in tensions at home, even leading to domestic violence and divorce, when women earn more and when women feel threatened.

In Kenya, men stated that, since they were the land owners and were also better acquainted with Organi Limited and CIP, it was better if they sold OFSP to Organi Limited. Men control or own land and can decide to stop women from cultivating. Women said they had limited access to and control of land. Low literacy levels for women relative to men also prevent them from participating and benefiting from commercialization

Recommendations: Gender transformative strategies to advocate for change in deep-rooted norms, perceptions and culture, which currently deter women from benefiting from commercialization, need to be integrated into commercialization strategies if women are to benefit equally. Gender norms that prevent women from participating in high-value markets need to be challenged.

Key constraint 6: Women lack access to resources needed to expand their sweetpotato enterprise

Men own oxen and ploughs and may not allow women to use them. Women may use inferior farm tools, such as hoes, to prepare the land which increases drudgery and may prevent women from commercializing their enterprise.

Recommendation: Develop a smallholder mechanization strategy that addresses gender issues.

Key constraint 7: Lack of engagement of young people in commercialization of sweetpotato

Some adult respondents reported that young people were not interested in commercializing sweetpotato. During the workshop it was confirmed that across the different countries, agriculture is rarely presented as a viable employment and livelihood option for young people. Even when young people are targeted, they are often unaware of potential opportunities.

Recommendation: Promote an agriculture commercialization mindset to young people and also ensure they have access to resources and training.

Key constraint 8: Lack of good infrastructure can restrict women from accessing more distant markets

Although larger more distant markets may pay more than small local markets, inadequate transport and dilapidated roads can make it harder for women to participate in such trade. Additionally, inadequate storage facilities are a key impediment to effective marketing as roots may rot before they can be sold. Since women dominate the retail trade where they buy in bulk and sell in small quantities, lack of storage affect them more than it does men.

Recommendation: The sweetpotato strategy is not able to address issues related to dilapidated road networks but it needs to acknowledge that this is a key limitation for many farmers, especially women. However simple

technologies for fresh root storage could be introduced which would immensely benefit women participating in the retail trade as well as local farmer women who need to store sweetpotato for longer for family consumption.

Overall recommendation: Gender should be mainstreamed into results-based management of projects and programs

Training on gender offered to project staff should be gender inclusive and track gender results and outputs. SUSTAIN project documents usually discuss the number of men and women farmers reached but targets need to go further to understand whether livelihoods for both men and women are improving. This kind of data needs to be captured by the M&E framework.

Who will use the recommendations?

Program/project implementers can use these recommendations and also the recommendations operationalization matrix, which provides more detailed recommended actions (see Annex 1), to guide and inform their actions to ensure that gender issues are addressed and mainstreamed in projects. The recommendations may also be useful for other future sweetpotato projects in the same or other countries, or for other development experts working on commercialization of other vegetatively propagated crops.

Operationalization of recommendations and activity matrix

Project implementers need to agree of division of roles and responsibilities among themselves. Also, not everything in this operationalization plan need to be implemented. Choice of activities depend on project objectives and available resources.

Recommendations	Action
Improving quality of sweetpotato planting material (vines) and roots	
Improve the availability of quality vines of varieties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce simple irrigation technologies to promote vine multiplication, for example use drip and re-use grey water from household use, this will be assist women farmers who do not have access to big water sources • Use Triple S technology (storage, sand, sprouting) in dry areas is conducive for resource poor women to conserve planting material. • Research on drought-tolerant varieties. This will especially benefit women as they may less access to irrigation equipment than men. • Train both men and women in the use of irrigation. • Involve men and women in evaluation of irrigation technologies to ensure their needs are met and addressed. • Organize both men and women farmers in groups for better access to irrigation. • Encourage women's groups and individuals to produce vines for sale. • Train farmers in quality seed management. • Time vine delivery by project implementers or by vine multipliers to men and women farmers who need vines to coincide with the start of the rainy season. • Develop radio programs to educate farmers on good agronomic practices that include consideration of gender issues such as having radio programs in local languages accessible to women • Link seed multipliers with the inspectorate (KEPHIS for Kenya) so that quality control is improved
Improve vine quality through use and adoption of good agronomic practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organize training on time of day and places that are convenient for women and girls • Incentivize couple training
Improving access to credit to expand the OFSP enterprise	
Linking farmers to credit sources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train male and female farmers on savings and credit management so they can benefit from SACCOs. • Link men and women farmers to microfinance institutions and other credit providers. • Provide access to affordable loans particularly for women who lack collateral

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developed a gender module on household cooperation and decision-making and incorporate it into farmer savings and loans training initiative or training on production and marketing. • Strategic partnerships with financial institutions such as to develop farmer friendly loan products, for example with CRDB Bank in Tanzania, FINCA International, women oriented and youth oriented microfinance institutions. • Introduce group savings and loans such as table banking which in some context has proved friendly to women borrowers and savers • Train both men and women on financial management and skills • Introducing or linking up to table banking or other banking mechanisms
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recruit both men and women farmers to attend financial literacy seminars and classes and invite microfinance institutions to talk to them • Develop training, attracting women to attend by mainly having it near their communities • Organize women into groups for easier borrowing • Work with financial institutions that can use crop harvest as a collateral for women
Improving commercialization benefits accruing to men and women	
Employing household-based approaches to sweetpotato commercialization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train male and female farmers on savings and credit management as well as financial literacy • Develop formal business plans that take into account gross margin analysis outcome of OFSP compared to other competing enterprises. • Awareness creation and counselling – psychological preparedness so that when the money comes from OFSP sales, the family must be ready to handle finances
Household approaches, including promotion of household budgeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage households in joint decision-making
Training on good agronomic practices, benefits of OFSP, improved seed and marketing offered to both men and women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop gender sensitive farmer selection and recruitment protocols and share them with extension, lead farmers and other local partners involved in farmer selection and recruitment for training. • Identify strong women leaders in local communities to help with mobilizing women in the community. • Develop alternative ways to recruit women to participate in training. Women from outside farmer groups will be recruited if women are not well represented in those groups. • Integrate gender modules into farmer training initiatives to promote collaboration at the household level. • Train both men and women farmers on business skills, including marketing and profit • Community dialogues led opinion leaders on gender related constraints to OFSP farming, as a point of entry into identifying solutions that work at local levels

Improving access to markets by women, men and young people	
Strengthening existing marketing groups and gender mainstreaming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate women to participate in farmer groups focusing on the production of sweetpotato planting material. • Encourage women to join existing farmer marketing groups or encourage the formation of new groups that are gender responsive. • Work with and encourage women sweetpotato/OFSP farmer groups and target them with market training. • Train men and women farmers on business skills including marketing and profit. • Improve linkages of men and women farmers with other markets. • Promote consumption of OFSP in local markets to promote local OFSP marketing which will benefit women since they dominate local market sales • Provide technical extension officers who can educate farmers on best farming practices to produce quality roots. • Provide access to processing machines which address gendered needs. This may include involving both men and women in the design and evaluation of processing machines. • Encourage women to join formal sweetpotato groups and to take up management positions in those groups to ensure that women's interests are represented. . • Introduce cheap sweetpotato storage mechanisms at local and urban retail markets to address market challenges related to post harvest losses. These will benefit women since they dominate local and retail markets of sweetpotato. • Use training methods that are responsive to women especially under conditions of low literacy. These methods could include audio-visual media in local language for training of farmer groups.
Diversification of markets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve both male and female farmers and entrepreneurs (as group members and individuals) in business training courses. • Offer practical training events in marketing, including hands-on rapid market assessment and farmer-trader clinics. • Include men and women farmers in training on development of tools, pretesting, market survey, simple analyses and marketing decision-making. • Develop gender responsive marketing strategies. • Establish a platform to identify and exploit marketing opportunities. • Construct stores at household/community levels for sweetpotato when capacity at Organi Limited is overwhelmed. • Involve women in evaluation of stores. • Work with breeding programs to introduce OFSP with locally preferred traits so that the crop serves a dual purpose as the raw material for Organi Limited and other private sector players and as commodity to be sold in local markets and mature informal sector markets. If OFSP can meet culinary demands in addition to private sector needs, its local market and alternative markets can develop organically, which would benefit women more since they dominate informal sector markets.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introduce OFSP storage facilities in city retail markets. • If storage is managed by trader groups, train them on its management and review the groups' management rules for gender inclusiveness, i.e. to include women on management committee and to have them in non- passive roles, e.g. as representatives on both the executive and technical committees. • Introduce cold storage facilities for OFSP. • Couple marketing • Market segmentation to cater for the middle class, which is becoming more health conscious • Cold Storage facilities • Import strategy • Disseminate market information to both men and women using multi-methods to reach men and women for example through phone text message, radio programs in local language as well as local/community message boards
Diversification of OFSP products	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train both men and women on value addition
Promote consumption of OFSP in local markets through behavior change communication campaigns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote OFSP in local informal sector markets through cooking demonstrations, recipe books and behavior change communication. (BCC) and local demand creation are key in establishing sustainable medium-scale businesses by creating alternative markets to mop up excess volumes not consumed by Organi Limited or other private sector buyers. • Disseminate nutrition knowledge at community meetings that men and women attend. • Use male peer groups to disseminate OFSP nutrition information. • Disseminate knowledge and information on sweetpotato nutritional qualities. • Promote the integration of sweetpotato into the culinary culture. Project implementers to work with local men and women to develop guide books and recipes that integrate OFSP in local cuisine, e.g. OFSP leaves as vegetables. • Involve men and women in tasting and evaluating OFSP recipes. • Sustained promotion (with continued advocacy for a strengthened local market)
Promote consumption of OFSP in urban markets through behavior change communication campaigns	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Design and implement an OFSP promotion campaign in the targeted urban areas using radio (local and national languages), market stalls, promotion events and posters in order to reach both male and female target audiences. • Make promotional events and strategies (pamphlets and posters in local dialects and with colorful pictures) accessible to women and men, such as Agricultural Society of Kenya shows and field days.
Varietal development and replacement strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish strong linkages with public research institutions with new varieties • Men and women farmer participation in varietal evaluation

Improve market linkages for men and women	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop ways to ensure that men and women have equal access to information
Promoting women's engagement	
Engaging women in sweetpotato agribusiness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train women actors in improved business skills so that they can engage at the higher nodes of the value chain as well as supply quality roots to the market.
Challenging gender norms that prevent women from participating in high value markets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train women actors on improved business skills so that they can engage at higher nodes of the value chain as well as supply quality roots to the market. Use transformative strategies • Work with men and women champions to promote engagement of women in high value sweetpotato production and trade in their communities. Use dialogue. • Gender transformative strategies to advocate for change in deep-rooted norms, perception and culture, which deter women from benefiting from commercialization • Mobilization of resources for program as opposed to projects. Programs are broader and last longer and so can integrate such strategies • Men control or own land and can decide to stop women from cultivating. Women said they had limited access to and control of land <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and enforcement of gender land policies • Promote men and women in decision making regarding family assets • Education and awareness creation on women land rights • Low literacy levels for women prevent them from participating and benefiting from commercialization <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve literacy levels for men and women • Functional adult literacy classes. Literacy is necessary for commercialization to benefit men and women • Men control income and feel insecure when women earn more than then. Thus commercialization can result in tensions at home or divorce when women earn more and women feel threatened • Group dialogues and Advocacy

Develop a gender and smallholder mechanization strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensitize men and women on the need to plan and agree at household level on the best way to manage the farm and other family assets • Understanding of gender dynamics around mechanization. This is key to ensure that both men and women take part in commercialization • Prior inventories and rapid needs assessments to document the needs of men, women and youth in mechanization • Strategy that highlights gender sensitive smallholder mechanized equipment to address the needs of men, women and youth • Identify local service providers who can be linked to organizations marketing small scale mechanized equipment, e.g. KickStart International • Organize farmer field mechanization days to carry out demonstrations for farmers • Men own oxen and ploughs and may not allow women to use. Women may use inferior farm tools such as hoes to prepare the land which increases drudgery and may prevent women from commercializing their enterprise <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community dialogues for behavior change. • Group dialogues may help women to access farming equipment.
Improvement of infrastructure (crosscutting)	
Storage (post-harvest handling of potato)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inadequate storage facilities are a key impediment to marketing and roots may rot before being sold <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Involve men and women in evaluation of postharvest handling technologies • Establish central collection/aggregation points; probably provide chippers, dryers (for curing)
Addressing cross-cutting gender issues: changes at the project level	
Training on gender offered to project staff to be gender inclusive	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Targets need to go beyond numbers of farmers reached to whether livelihoods for both men and women are improving. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Train partners and CIP staff on gender-sensitive project design and implementation. • Train extension staff and other project staff on household approaches to ensure that men and women benefit from OFSP commercialization. • Directly invite both men and women to participate in project activities (use the couple training approach). • Project partners to ensure that women are recruited and participate in all project processes, and to report on targets.

A gender-responsive behavior change communication strategy	<p>Project implementers to integrate gender into the project’s behavior change communication strategy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender transformative strategies to advocate for change in deep-rooted norms, perception and culture, which deter women from benefiting from commercialization • Mobilization of resources for programs as opposed to projects. Programs are broader and last longer and so can integrate such strategies • Sensitization of farmers (men, women and the youth) to good and improved agronomic practices to be able to produce quality produce to meet the needs and specifications of the OFSP market • Organize farmer training – seminars, farmer field days • Identify role model farmers (men and women) and use their farms for farmer demonstrations during farmer field days
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The International Potato Center (known by its Spanish acronym CIP) is a research-for-development organization with a focus on potato, sweetpotato, and Andean roots and tubers. CIP is dedicated to delivering sustainable science-based solutions to the pressing world issues of hunger, poverty, gender equity, climate change and the preservation of our Earth's fragile biodiversity and natural resources.

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